



TAKOMA TRANSPORTATION STUDY EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT SUMMARY

I. Transportation Study Background and Overview

On June 4, 2002, the DC Council passed the *Takoma Central District Plan*, which incorporates the Small Area Plan for proposed commercial and residential development in the Lamond Riggs and Takoma DC neighborhoods. The District of Columbia's Office of Planning (OP) coordinated this Plan and its purpose was to assist in the development of the Lamond Riggs, Takoma DC, and Takoma Park, Maryland areas.

Beginning, Monday, October 23, 2002, the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) and the city of Takoma Park, Maryland, through their consultant, DMJM Harris, began performance of the *Takoma Transportation Study*. The boundaries for this study are as follows: Eastern Avenue, NW; Georgia Avenue, NW; Peabody Street, NW; Eastern Avenue, NE; Walnut Avenue; Westmoreland Avenue; Carroll Avenue; Philadelphia Avenue; and Piney Branch Road.

The *Takoma Transportation Study* compliments the *Takoma Central District Plan* by providing feasibility analysis for potential transportation improvements that can be implemented in these communities in order to maintain the vibrancy of the neighborhoods and reduce traffic congestion on major thoroughfares near residences. The purpose of the *Takoma Transportation Study* is to examine existing and future traffic conditions in the study area and to determine short and long-term traffic management and infrastructure improvements to reduce congestion. The study will address automotive, mass transit, bicycle and pedestrian transportation needs in the study area. Furthermore, DMJM Harris will conduct a study of commercial parking needs in support of a municipal parking facility on the Takoma Park, Maryland side of Eastern Avenue.

DDOT, Takoma Park, and DMJM Harris began the public participation process for this study the week of October 7, 2002. The first meeting was held on Tuesday, October 8 at the MedStar Manor Home in the Lamond Riggs community. The next meeting was held at the Takoma Park, Maryland Municipal Building on October 9, and the last kickoff meeting was on October 10 at the Washington Theological Union. The purpose of these meetings was to obtain input for development of the traffic management concept designs. Public stakeholders such as elected officials from the District of Columbia and Takoma Park, Maryland participated, as well as District of Columbia Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners, members of local community groups, and citizens at large.



All of these stakeholders discussed with DDOT, Takoma Park, and DMJM Harris personnel the proposed Scope of Work and schedule for the transportation study and the timelines for receiving public comment.

In December DDOT and the city of Takoma Park held two more public meetings: one on December 9, at the Washington Theological Union and another on December 12, at the Takoma Park Municipal Building. In this series of meetings DMJM Harris presented an existing conditions presentation to the public and received comment. Based on the community recommendations DMJM Harris generated a *Draft Existing Conditions Report* and delivered it to DDOT and Takoma Park in January of 2003.

The *Takoma Transportation Study Existing Conditions Report* catalogs the current automotive, mass transit, bicycle and pedestrian problems facing the study area, as discovered by analysis or public comments. Preliminary findings, as well as suggested transit improvements for the study are at the back of this summary. In the next round of public meetings, that will be held in the middle of March 2003, DDOT, and the city of Takoma Park will provide residents with a final opportunity to identify transportation problem areas and provide suggested improvements to the study area before DMJM Harris delivers a draft *Takoma Transportation Final Report*. The draft *Final Report* will be available to the public in May of 2003.

II. Analysis Parameters of Draft Existing Conditions Report

The *Draft Existing Conditions Report* is the first hard analytical work product from the *Takoma Transportation Study*. The analytical parameters for this are: major roadways in the study area; pedestrian/bicycle facilities and issues; parking needs; and mass transit facilities and service. In order to provide this analysis, DDOT, Takoma Park, and DMJM Harris personnel conducted an extensive data collection effort to gain an understanding of existing conditions in the study area. Information was obtained through field evaluations in the study area during peak and off peak hours to further assist in the quantitative assessment of the existing conditions.

III. Major Roadways Reviewed in the Draft Report

The thirteen major roadways within the *Takoma Transportation Study* area are:

1. Georgia Avenue
2. Philadelphia Avenue
3. New Hampshire Avenue
4. Eastern Avenue
5. Piney Branch Road

6. Blair Road
7. Carroll Street/Carroll Avenue
8. North Capital Street
9. Kansas Avenue
10. Aspen Street
11. Butternut Street
12. 5th Street, NW
13. 3rd Street, NW

See Issue Area Maps (pp. 7 – 10)

Major roadways are defined as any street within the boundary area that is considered a principal arterial, minor arterial, or collector street within the functional classification structure used by DDOT. Each of these roadway types are considered major because they are designed to handle heavy traffic flow and when utilized properly, keep commuter and other through traffic off of local streets.

Another important characteristic of major roadways is that they are eligible for federal funding from the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), its Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or other federal regulatory/administrative agencies. The *Takoma Transportation Study* area has two principal arterials, eight minor arterials, and four collectors.

Principal Arterials

Georgia Avenue (the western boundary of the study area) and Philadelphia Avenue (in Takoma Park) are designed to handle the heaviest traffic volume in the study area. Theoretically, commuter and through traffic should use these thoroughfares as much as possible when traveling through this section of our region. Nonetheless, due to heavy traffic volumes and congestion through traffic is pushed onto smaller streets that are not designed to handle heavy transit flow.

Minor Arterials

New Hampshire Avenue, Eastern Avenue, Piney Branch Road, Blair Road, Carroll Street/Carroll Avenue, North Capital Street and Kansas Avenue are the minor arterials in the study area. These streets are designed to handle through traffic in the region but at a lesser volume than principal arterials.

Collector Streets

Aspen Street, Butternut Street, 5th Street, and 3rd Street are the four collectors in the study area. Each of these streets has distinct issues and the residents of Aspen and Butternut Streets have been some of the most active participants in the *Takoma Transportation Study* process. Aspen Street, in particular, is the subject of much contention in the study area due to its heavy cut through traffic. Residents along this street have come to every public meeting and DDOT personnel attended a meeting on Aspen Street in December of 2002 to further discuss their concerns. As a result of resident requests along the Aspen Street corridor, DDOT will make Aspen Street at 8th Street an all way stop in the summer of 2003.

IV. Pedestrian/Bicycle Facility Needs

Pedestrian and bicycle safety are major areas of interest within the *Takoma Transportation Study* area. In terms of pedestrian needs, DMJM Harris performed a comprehensive field assessment of all pedestrian facilities within a one-quarter mile radius of the Takoma Metro Station. *See Map, p. 13.* DMJM Harris analyzed the conditions of the sidewalks, the sidewalk material, and the locations and widths of any buffer between the curb and sidewalk. This review also located disabled access ramps and assessed connectivity of ramps with respect to each other and the other pedestrian features. The comprehensive assessment of pedestrian facilities along with suggested improvements is contained with the *Preliminary Suggestions – Pedestrian Facilities Section* of this summary.

The Metropolitan Branch Trail (MBT)

Currently, DDOT is working on a *Metropolitan Branch Trail Report* and an accompanying bicycle facility that will go through the heart of the *Takoma Transportation Study* area. DDOT personnel from our bike program have been involved with this transportation study from its inception and have attended all of the public meetings. In April of 2003, the DDOT bike program will begin public meetings within the study area communities to garner stakeholder input on the MBT alignment. *See Map, p. 11.*

Each alignment DDOT is considering for the MBT follows a southeast to northwest path, originating at the intersection of Blair Road and Peabody Street and ending at the intersection of Eastern Avenue and Baltimore Avenue. Potential ‘conflict locations’ for the MBT within the study area are as follows:

1. Peabody Street and N. Capital Street
2. Blair Road and Van Buren Street
3. Cedar Street/4th Street/Blair Road
4. Carroll Street and Maple Avenue
5. Carroll Street and Cedar Avenue

6. Eastern Avenue and Cedar Avenue
7. Eastern Avenue and Piney Branch Road

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Once DDOT finishes the *Metropolitan Branch Trail Alignment Study* it will become clearer which of the above streets will need further analysis to accommodate both bicycle, pedestrian, and automotive traffic.

V. Public Transit Facilities and Service

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and the Montgomery County Ride On service (Ride On) supply public transit service to the study area through the Takoma Metro Station. There are currently nine off-street bus bays at the Takoma Station. Four of these bays are assigned to Metrobus routes and four are assigned to Ride On routes. The ninth bay is not assigned to a route and is used for bus layover parking.

Bus Routes that Originate from Takoma Metro Station

Eight Metrobus routes originate from Takoma Station: 14th Street Line (Routes 52, 53, 54); Takoma – Petworth Line (Route 62); Chillum Road Line (Routes F1, F2); Takoma – Fort Totten Line (Route K2); and Calverton Express (Route Z19). No new Metrobus routes are anticipated at the Takoma Station. DDOT personnel met with WMATA and according to their analysis, if future ridership growth on the existing routes requires additional service, each of the four bays could accommodate at least twice as many buses as currently scheduled.

Short and Long-Term Maryland Bus Bay Requirements

According to the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation, one additional bus bay will be required for Ride On service expansion in the next one to three years. This will increase Ride On's requirement to five bays. Montgomery County has also confirmed that they will need an additional Ride On bay in the long term, which will bring their requirements to six bays. The *Takoma Transportation Study* is defining long-term need or usage as 'beyond three years calculated from 2003.'

In addition to the short-term requirement for ten bus bays (four for Metrobus and six for Ride On), a minimum of two additional bus layover/parking spaces will be needed on site in order to accommodate future operations within the Takoma Metro Station facility. Therefore, in the long-term Takoma Metro Station will need a total of twelve bays to accommodate both Metro and Ride On bus service.

Entrance and Exit of Buses at Takoma Station

When DDOT personnel met with Montgomery County personnel, Ride On made it clear their bus services needed to continue exiting the Takoma Metro Station on Eastern Avenue as well as Carroll Street. Initial development designs from Eakin Youngentab (Eakin) created a potential conflict between a developer attempting to accomplish a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) scheme and one of our regions mass transit providers. However, DDOT and DMJM Harris personnel met with representatives of Eakin and they have changed their development layout to accommodate Ride On's existing entrance and exit patterns.

Currently, all Metro and Ride On buses enter Takoma Metro Station from Carroll Street. Both Metro and Ride On anticipate that this access pattern will remain the same in the future. All Metro buses, with the exception of two daily Route Z19 trips, exit the station at Carroll Street. This pattern is also anticipated to remain the same in the future. Ride On buses currently exit the station both from Carroll Street and Eastern Avenue, depending on their destination.

VI. Existing Conditions Commentary and Preliminary Suggestions

The following pages of this summary contain a comprehensive listing of all *Takoma Transportation Study* Existing Conditions and Preliminary Suggestions through March of 2003. The data consists of:

1. Area Maps 1 – 4 with accompanying Commentary and Preliminary Suggestions (pp. 7 – 10)
2. MBT Maps with accompanying Commentary and Preliminary Suggestions (pp. 11 – 12)
3. Pedestrian/Mass Transit Facilities Map with accompanying Preliminary Suggestions (p. 13)

Please remember, at the March 2003 public meetings residents and stakeholders within the study area will be able to provide additional comments and suggestions to these lists. Thereafter, a draft *Takoma Transportation Study Final Report* will be compiled and released to the public in May of 2003.